



World Christian Fellowship

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Church and Purpose- 05

Position of a leader – Nursing Mother

1 Thessalonians 2:7-12, *But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children.⁸ So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us.⁹ For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.¹⁰ You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; ¹¹ as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children,¹² that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.*

New Testament gives us a number of metaphors for spiritual leaders.

1 Peter 5:1-4, spiritual leaders are called shepherds,

1 Corinthians 4:1-2, spiritual leaders are called stewards,

1 Timothy 2:7, spiritual leader is a proclaimer of the King's message.

2 Timothy 2:2, spiritual leaders are teachers.

The spiritual leader as a

- shepherd,
- steward,
- Messenger,
- teacher, and
- slave

Here Apostle Paul takes it to the next level.

Nursing Mother and Father.

Mother: gentle care

1 Thessalonians 2:7, But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children

Galatians 4:29, But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now.

Father: Strong Authority

1 Thessalonians 2:11, as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children,

1 Corinthians 4:15, For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

1 Thessalonians 2:7-9, But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. ⁸So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had

become dear to us.⁹ For you remember, brethren, our labour and toil; for labouring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.

Paul chooses out of all the human realm the most intimate, tender, cherishing, human relationship. There is nothing to match this relationship.

Absolutely there is no human relationship that is as tender, gentle as the nursing mother and the infant child, the tenderest relationship in all human life.

The term here definitely refers to a nursing mother because of the phrase "her own children." This is no surrogate here.

Nursing mothers having a fond affection for their children. We would say that a mother who doesn't have this kind of affection, a mother who doesn't see this as the sweetest moments of life for her to be nursing that little child has somehow lost touch with the intention of God's design for normal motherly love.

A mother with a little child in her arms has fond affection. That's normal and very natural. That's God-given that's what motivates her nursing, and her gentle care.

Every mother knows there's no praise for this, there are no achievements and there are no awards for mothering.

All you get is crying babies, dirty diapers, sleepless nights, runny noses, and illnesses. It's hard, it's consistent, endless and watchful care.

Paul says, "*We were pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God.*"

First Paul imparted the gospel of God.

Impart: You give them the gospel but even though you've given it to them, you still possess it.

We say we share our faith. Paul is saying, look, we had a fond affection for you and consequently we were well pleased to share with you the gospel of God.

Paul is saying that not only to give you Gospel that which saved you and that sanctifies you. But more than that we were pleased to give you our own lives and our own soul. That means the totality of our earthly existence.

I literally give up my life for you!

What does a mother do?

A mother who is faithful to being she sets aside her life for the life of her beloved baby.

- She is sacrificial.
- She is utterly unselfish.
- She is generous.
- She is abundant with that life.
- That life dominates her life.

You can't have a baby and go on living your own life and fulfill God's intention for a mother.

The baby consumes your life.

You are there to

- ✓ Feed,
- ✓ love,
- ✓ change,
- ✓ to put it to sleep,
- ✓ to wake it up,
- ✓ to dress it, and
- ✓ to care for its every need.

That's what God intended.

I will gladly give my life because I love you!

2 Corinthians 12:14-15, *Now for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be burdensome to you; for I do not seek yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.* ¹⁵ *And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved.*

It was love spent in unselfish sacrifice!

The essence of a mother's love, what Apostle Paul had for the church.

- ✓ You were dear to us.
- ✓ You were of value.
- ✓ You were worthy.
- ✓ You were priceless to me.

✓ I can't treat you with indifference.

There is a strong love affection towards the people of God.

V8-9, *⁸So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. ⁹For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.*

Picture of a mother, working, laboring night and day, providing for her children so that she is no burden for them.

2 Corinthians 6:10, *as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.*

Our lives were marked by

- poverty,
- disrespect,
- disrepute,
- trouble, and
- persecution.

In the midst of all these things we weren't takers, we were givers.

What does a mother want?

What can a child give a mother?

Absolutely nothing.

What price can a child pay for his/her mother who nursed them?

What price can a child pay for her deep affection?

What price can a child pay for the longing of a mother's heart that lifts it up and embraces it in love?

There's no price.

The child has nothing to give and nothing can be given.

Paul said we made the maximum effort to feed you my spiritual children. We provided

- ✓ the tenderness,
- ✓ the intimacy,
- ✓ the nourishment, and
- ✓ the care.

Why?

So that you wouldn't have to carry the load and we carried it all as a mother.

This is how Paul and his companions proclaimed the gospel of God.

The great truth of salvation we proclaimed it to you without ever being a burden and on our own part we laboured hard night and day to keep you receiving the nourishing truth.

Took great sacrifice to be a mother. It changes your whole life.

Paul says that's how it is in spiritual leadership. Around the clock care is the picture of a mother and that is part of effective spiritual leadership.

For any leader their heart's desire should be mothers as well as fathers, not just holding authority over the people of God but being intimate, available, tender, kind, sympathetic and compassionate.

Conclusion:

1 Thessalonians chapter 2,

In verse 1 he says, "For you yourselves know."

In verse 2, "As you know."

In verse 5, "As you know."

In verse 9, "For you recall."

In verse 10, "You are witnesses."

In verse 11, "Just as you know."

Paul calls them to reach back to what they know about him.

He was there in person.

They don't need second-hand testimony.

They should never listen to detractors.

They were the living testimony of Paul's credibility and effectiveness as God's man.

Will you be able to show such life in front of the people whom you minister?